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RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3831
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 001076

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SUBJECT: CONTINUED ANGER ABOUT EXTREMIST ATTACK

REF: JAKARTA 1070

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b+d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Many Indonesians have condemned the June 1 attack on a peaceful rally held in Jakarta. The GOI--as of late June 3--has reportedly still not arrested anyone for the attack. Charge underscored to a key contact in the President's Office the need for action against the perpetrators. A staffer in the President's Office confirmed to Pol/C that the GOI was reviewing whether it should ban the extremist group that carried out the attack. The extremists seem to be losing in the court of public opinion. END SUMMARY.

THE AFTERMATH

¶2. (SBU) Indonesia is still reeling in the aftermath of a brutal ambush by Islamic extremists on a peaceful demonstration for religious freedom held at the National Monument (Monas) in central Jakarta on June 1. Up to 20 people--including some well-known moderate religious leaders and human rights activists--were injured in the attack (see reftel). Some whose injuries are more serious remain in hospital. (Note: Per reftel, Charge visited with some of the injured on June 2.) The media reported that unknown groups staged two attacks on the headquarters of the extremists in Cirebon, West Java, and Yogyakarta. One member of the moderate Muslim organization Nahdhatul Ulama was reportedly injured. Mission is looking into the reports.

NO ARRESTS YET

¶3. (C) From what we understand, there have been no arrests of those who carried out the attack as of late June 3. In a June 3 meeting with Pol/C, Tri Sukma "Nanu" Djandam of the President's Office related that President Yudhoyono--per his June 2 public statement--had ordered the police to arrest those members of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) who carried out the attack. According to Djandam, members of FPI

who were involved in the incident "have gone underground." He said the GOI is specifically searching for "five FPI leaders," including Munarman (one name only). (Note: Munarman is a FPI street thug shown throttling a demonstrator during the June 1 attack in a front-page photo in a Jakarta newspaper.)

¶4. (C) Echoing President Yudhoyono's statement, Pol/C noted that the June 1 attack made Indonesia look bad, tarnishing its image of tolerance. Pol/C urged that the GOI take action against the perpetrators. Djandam replied that the Indonesian government "is doing all it can and was committed to making sure there were no more such incidents." (Note: Charge underscored the need for action on this matter in a communication with Dino Djalal, a key assistant to the President. Djalal replied: "We will deal very firmly with the FPI.")

CONSIDERING A BAN?

¶5. (C) Queried by Pol/C, Djandam added that the GOI was considering banning the FPI. He noted that on June 2 President Yudhoyono had met with National Police Chief Sutanto and Coordinating Minister for Politics, Law and Security Widodo Adi Sucipto to discuss the situation. Based on that meeting, Widodo had announced to the media that the government was considering a formal ban of FPI, citing a 1985 law that allows for the suspension of "dangerous" organization. Widodo said, "We should not only see this problem as a violent action, but as something that may tarnish our country's civilization...We are now conducting a strict legal process in the case." Djandam said it would take time for the government to finish its review of whether FPI should be banned given the legal issues involved.

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¶6. (C) In the meantime, Indonesian National Police sources told the Mission that the investigation had been turned over to Police Investigator Bambang Hendarso Danuri, a three star general, and that arrests were imminent. As noted by Djandam, media reports said the police were investigating five suspects.

FPI VOWS TO FIGHT

¶7. (U) For its part, FPI is unapologetic. Habib Rizieq, a major FPI leader, called on his supporters to prepare for "war" against Ahmadiyah (an Islamic sect that FPI wants banned in Indonesia). He warned the government to ban the sect or face FPI's wrath, stating: "We will never accept the arrest of a single member of our forces before the government disbands Ahmadiyah....We will fight until our last drop of blood."

WIDESPREAD CONDEMNATION

¶8. (C) Many Indonesians have publicly condemned the attack, including:

--Former president Abdurrahman Wahid criticized the government's actions as too slow in response to violence and said he supported a ban on the vigilante group;

-- Nadhlatul Ulama (NU) spokesperson Masdar Farid Masudi said, "NU opposes any violence for any reason. There is no religious justification that tolerates violent action....If the state ignores this case, its authority will be destroyed and more anarchy will emerge" (Note: NU is one of the biggest Muslim organizations in the country.);

-- Din Syamsuddin, the chair of Muhammadiyah, the country's second largest Muslim organization, said it was the GOI's responsibility to take action to control groups causing social unrest. He said, "This action is not in line with Islamic teachings and will tarnish Islam's image. It is a

crime that must be prosecuted. I hope everyone can control him or herself and avoid violence and anarchy";

-- Spokesperson for the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Kontras) urged the President to "turn his attention to the incident" and demanded that the police arrest FPI members involved in the incident; and,

-- House Speaker Agung Laksono said "The House condemns the FPI's immoral acts. Therefore, the House calls on the police to take appropriate measures against the perpetrators of the violence and those who commanded them, and investigate what their motives are."

¶9. (C) Not everyone was fully on board with those sentiments, however. On the plus side, the Chair of the influential Indonesian Council of Ulemas (MUI), H. Amidhan, said, "We really deplore the incident. I am really opposed to FPI's actions." On the negative side, he claimed that the rally-goers who were attacked had acted in "a provocative manner."

EXTREMISTS LOSING

¶10. (C) Based on our soundings, the extremists have basically lost in the court of public opinion due to the brutality of their actions. As reviewed above, many Indonesians are simply disgusted by what happened on June 1. That said, the FPI is not backing down at this point and more turbulence is possible. Founded some ten years ago, the FPI--which explicitly supports the creation of an Islamic state--has for years operated in extra-legal ways. The government seems committed to arresting the perpetrators and we will continue to urge that it do so. Mission's press

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statement--which was issued late June 2--is beginning to net media coverage here with Indonesians taking note.

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